

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application. Claims 1-31 are pending. Claims 1-19 and 24-31 are allowed. Claims 20-23 stand rejected. Claims 20 and 22 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the claimed invention rather than to avoid prior art.

35 USC § 112, Second Paragraph Rejection

The Office Action indicates that Claims 20-23 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

With regard to Claims 20 and 22, the Examiner states that subtracting must involve at least two operands.

Applicant has amended Claims 20 and 22 to include a plurality of operands. Applicant respectfully submits that they are presently in condition for allowance.

With regard to Claims 21 and 23, the Examiner states that the limitations of Claim 21 fails to be clearly related to "subtracting" and "producing" of Claim 20, and that the limitations of Claim 23 fail to be clearly related to Claim 22.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 21, for example, sets forth, "generating a carry-out of the subtraction operation," of Claim 20, which is clearly related to subtracting, and further sets forth, "producing the second result of the magnitude comparison," of Claim 20, "responsive to the most significant bit," of Claim 20, "the carry out," of Claim 21, "and the zero indicator," of Claim 20. Applicant submits that the limitation of producing in Claim 21 is, therefore, clearly related to the producing of Claim 20. Similarly, Applicant respectfully submits that to "generate a zero indicator ... a most significant bit ... a carry-out of the subtraction operation, and produce the second result of the magnitude comparison responsive to the most significant bit, the carry out and the zero indicator," as set forth in Claim 23 is clearly related to Claim 22.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that if the Examiner intends to maintain a rejection based on indefiniteness, the relevant question is whether the scope of the claim is clear to a hypothetical person possessing the ordinary level of skill in the pertinent art.

Applicant respectfully submits that the scope of Claims 20-23, as presently amended, is clear.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw his rejection of Claims 21 and 23 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph.

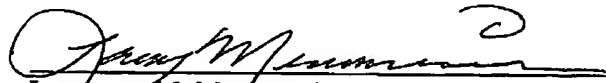
CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite or assist in the allowance of the present application, the Examiner is invited to call Lawrence Mennemeier at (408) 765-2194.

Authorization is hereby given to charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any charges that may be due.

Respectfully submitted,
BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN

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